

From: avpq heather [<mailto:heatheravpq11@optusnet.com.au>]

Sent: Tuesday, 7 February 2012 6:57 PM

To: 'Anna'

Subject: best practice - oh no

Hi Anna

Thought I might just send a quick message to say I am thinking about an alternative for "best practice"

This was what Katherine Smith asked you and I to come up with, remember?

I have had a few different thoughts, but can't remember them tonight.

I wonder if you have given it any thought?

Hh

Heather Millhouse | AVPQ PO Box 78 | Sherwood 4075

mob. 0402 621 007 | admin@avpq.org.au | www.avpq.org.au

From: Anna [<mailto:anna.alderson@iinet.net.au>]

Sent: Wednesday, 8 February 2012 4:05 PM

To: 'avpq heather'

Subject: RE: best practice - oh no

Hi Heather

Thanks for the reminder! It had slipped off my agenda...

I've done a bit of mooching around – and good old Wikipedia has proved to be a useful source of some commonly used alternatives.

Among the one's listed there are

- good practices
- smart practices
- contextual practice
- promising practice
- evidence-based practice
- research validated best practice
- field tested best practice

No term is without its problems. I'm a bit visceral in my response to 'best practice' because it's been so over-used, and while it might be appropriate if one's trying to 'bench mark' (another horrible term) against other organisations/businesses where one might legitimately expect standardisation, I think it's rarely useful in service type groups/organisations. It's also inclined to lead one to think this is as 'good as it gets' – and in human services, it never is...

Where are you at with this?

Hope all goes well in your part of the world and you're not being besieged by water.

Cheers

Anna Alderson

From: avpq heather [<mailto:heatheravpq11@optusnet.com.au>]

Sent: Thursday, 9 February 2012 12:19 PM

To: 'Anna'

Subject: RE: best practice - oh no

Hi Anna

I've been thinking that the purpose of this term is to indicate that the tools, policies, document, templates, formats, practices that are being recorded on Katherine's database or wikipages are

examples of what has worked for our local AVP organisations operating in our specific contexts. So my issue with best practice is that it assumes superiority, when clearly our work is the product of local people dealing with our local issues and the AVP materials and principles.

Your list speaks to that
I'd like to add

- What works
- What we use
- Our praxis
- Ways of working
- Ways of organising
- Effective practice
- Local solutions
- Viable options
- Organising pragmatically
- Principles and pragmatics
- Cultivating principled practice
- Principled functioning
- Operating effectively
- Solving local issues
- Working it out
- Shaping our organisation
- Forming and finessing
- Practical suggestions
- Organisational guidance
- Management tools
- Organising ideas

Since Selene is also on this little group, can she contribute or maybe choose?
hh

Hi Heather

Sorry I didn't get back sooner

What a lot of wonderful additions! And your reasoning re purpose is very helpful. It got me thinking that perhaps what would/could be helpful is a list of questions that people could use to make their own evaluations of 'tools, policies, document, templates, formats, practices' etc. This could include ways to identify some of the important characteristics of their participants and their communities e.g. the language/s people are using, the competencies/needs of participants, the locations in which they're operating, the resources they have available... Mind you it might all get too unwieldy – but just a thought.

I've just been speaking with Katherine and said we'd send the list through to her at some point and she'll post it for further discussion in whatever forum/s she thinks appropriate, but I'm happy to in this occasional email discussion for a while longer if you think that would be useful.

And I've copied Selene into this so she can see where our discussion has been going so far.

Cheers.

Anna

From: heather millhouse [mailto:heatheravpq11@optusnet.com.au]

Sent: Wednesday, 15 February 2012 4:19 AM

To: Anna; Selene Moonbeams

Subject: Re: best practice - oh no

cool Anna

Hi Selene,

all sounds cool to me.

If we are thinking that the wiki is a resource and people will need to get clarity for themselves over what might be needed for them, given their situation, then a bunch of questions sounds like a great idea.

It will help frame a selection and adaptation process so that the tools, docs, processes to be applied have been considered in the light of AVP principles etc.

For me, atm, a theoretical framework for selecting process that Ive been using asks us to get clear about 4 processes in order - this comes from some Aboriginal academics from over this way, Karen Martin, Tyson Yunkaporta and Doris Shillingworth. Karen is one of the women I spoke about at the Gathering.

They say, start with

Ethics - or respecting law and spirit

then look at

Relationships - being connected

then consider

Knowledges - intellectual reflection

before deciding upon

Practice - methodology, what to do

So, using that framework, if I was to set up some questions that might be useful, the order of questioning that I might want to use could look like this:

ETHICS

- What part does Transforming Power play in the situation I am focussed on?
- How do AVP principles play into this situation most effectively and how can they inform our frame of reference?
- What are the cultural roots of this particular situation and how do they connect to TP?

RELATIONSHIPS

- Who needs to be involved in planning, development and decision making in this situation?
- Which perspectives might potentially be marginalised and who might potentially be misrepresented?
- Who can represent the perspectives of those who cannot be involved, giving a voice to the marginalised?
- How strong and open are the connections amongst those involved and what will help them be honest and trusting?

KNOWLEDGES

- What are the facts around this situation I am/we are focussed on?

- What deep sense of knowing can I/we bring to light about this situation?
- Who else needs to be listened to, in order to be better informed about this situation?
- Has everyone had time and space to think about this situation in depth?

OPERATIONAL PRACTICES

- What AVP processes do we already know about that might be a valuable way to work?
- How can we work with where "the rubber hits the road" so that we are acting on stuff that matters?
- How can we "walk the talk" in order to achieve respectful interaction with those who count?
- What are our fears around any practice we choose and how might we address those?

Im sure there are a billion questions
those are some from me.

Hey,
this is fun.
hh